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AN OCCASIONAL
ESSAY.

ON THE
BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT
OF THE
ENGLISH NATION,

K
In Opposition to

Min—st---l Oppression.

Interspersed with

Some REMARKS on the late Resignations,
and written in Commemoration of the
Important Struggle in the Year 1756.

L O N D O N :

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Some Remarks on the
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ESSAY.



WHEN the Basis of a Building becomes feeble and decayed, with the Weight it has too long sustained, it is necessary, in order to preserve the Superstructure, to substitute other Props, whose Strength may be better depended on: The same Reason, as it holds good in Architecture, is equally substantial in National
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and Political Affairs; nor can any Thing reflect more Lustre on the Character of a People, than their Ardency to maintain and support the Dignity and Strength of their Constitution. But very often, tho' it has seem'd highly necessary to remove the moulder'd Pillars of a State, yet the People have been so much intimidated for fear of increasing the impending Danger, that they have retarded their Design, till such Time that the Foundation hath given way, and involv'd a whole Nation in Misery and Ruin.

WHEN such a general Catastrophe as this happens, what Methods can be put in Practice to revive a fallen People? To whom can they fly for Relief? Is there a neighbouring Power, but what, instead of aiding and assisting them, will take all the Advantages they can of their distressed Situation, and enrich themselves with the Spoils of a declining and perplexed Constitution? Perhaps some invidious Enemy, under a specious Pretence of Sympathy and Friendship, may, during the national Calamity, affect what before was never in his Power; and

and while the Hand of Distress lies heavy on the People, propose Methods, which may have all the Appearance of Tendernefs and Regard for their Welfare, but in the End are calculated with no other View, than to bring them and their Posterity under the Yoke of perpetual Bondage. — Who can reflect on such a sudden Vicissitude of national Glory, without a thorough Antipathy and Resentment to those, whose Selfishness or Extravagance, whose Cowardice and Neglect, were the first Sources of a Peoples Slavery and Dishonour? — Who is there that was born free and independent, who now enjoys the Happiness of a good Estate, purchased by the Care and Frugality of his venerable Sire, or attained by his own Industry and Affiduity, can brook the Thoughts of seeing his Possessions plundered and dispoiled, his Family subservient to the base Purposes of a foreign Enemy, himself a Slave, and perhaps the youngest and dearest of his Offspring made a Sacrifice to appease the Rage of a petty Villain in Power?

WHEN Afflictions of this Nature arise in the Breast of an honest free-born Individual, who looks upon Liberty equal with Life itself, nay even desires to exist no longer, than while he can enjoy his Rights and Properties; he will sacrifice every little Advantage that occurs with his present Interest, to secure and protect his future Happiness. — Will he not frame to himself the natural Chain of Dependency, that links his Countrymen in the same common Cause? — Will he not endeavour to set aside the Pleasures which now surround his Heart, for the substantial Benefit of Peace hereafter. — Where is the Man, who can enjoy himself in the petty Trifles and Amusements which dance and revel in the Lap of Indolence, if he was assured, that his Pleasure was so near at an End, as even to set with the next Sun? Will he not then rouse from his Lethargy, and shake off the little Indulgences that obstruct his Arm from the Defence of every thing which is dear and valuable; nay more, will he not endeavour to animate those, whom Luxury and Ease have enervated, whom Avarice have corrupted, and
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with a Voice like the shrill Notes of *Bellona's* Trumpet, hollow in the Ear of the snoring Sluggard, and wake him to a due Sense of his Country's Ruin.

WHOEVER can be intimidated when his own Freedom, and that of his Country, is at Stake, must act in Contradiction with his own selfish Principles; for after he has given way to all the Fears and Dangers that Meanness and Cowardice can suggest, is still in a worse Situation, than if he had made a vigorous Defence: For if he fears but for himself and Property, why does he not shew the natural Resentment of an injur'd Man, whose Rights and Privileges are openly and violently infring'd upon? Why will he suffer himself to be robbed of his All, and his Person expos'd to whatever Punishment an Enemy shall please to inflict? Are his Sufferings on the Rack less excruciating, than if he had been fix'd there for his Bravery and Courage? Will not his Foes shew less Regard to him for his Pusillanimity than his Valour; and rather augment his Torments, from a thorough Contempt of such Insignificance? On the other hand, where

a steady Resolution actuates the Mind of a Man to preserve his Life and Properties against the Incurfions of an Enemy, though Force and Numbers may repel his Endeavours, yet he cannot meet with a worse Fate than the selfish Coward, who has tamely submitted to their Power.

BUT should Success attend the Greatness of his Intention, he has some Hopes of preserving himself and Property; which are the grand Motives of his Courage; and as a little Spark of Fire often spreads to a Flame, so his extraordinary Valour may communicate itself to others of his Countrymen, who, acting in joint Concurrence with him, may overcome that Force, which otherwise they must have fallen a ~~Prey~~ to; and provided they should not succeed, their Cause is still the same: — Their Chains are glorious, and their Fall attended with this Consolation, that though it was not in their Power to command Success, yet they have done all they could to deserve it.

SUCH is the Nature of Pusillanimity, that it can never gain its Point, for its own Fear produces

produces the very Danger it would shun ; while true Courage, by bearing up against the Tide of Adversity, very often meets with Success, where it was impossible to entertain the least Hope ; and more has been achiev'd upon this Principle, by the Prowess of a single Arm, than by whole Armies, where the contrary has been predominant ; for while the Coward is meditating to save a Life, which is hardly worth keeping, by a dishonourable Flight, the Hero is, at all Events, resolved to stand the Shock of his Enemies, and if he must fall, the Glory of his Actions will be, in some Measure, a Recompence to his Country for so great a Loss.

To make Distinctions of this Nature, is not only a pleasing Task to an Author, but a Duty incumbent upon him ; for if the Coward was but to revolve in his own Breast the Disadvantages and Ignominies that attend his Person and Character ; and on the other hand, what Honour, and even Safety, depends upon the Courage and Magnanimity of the Hero, he would endeavour

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to divest himself of a Principle, so notoriously opposite to the Purpose he pursues.

FOR a Writer to lay before the Publick, what he is certain will be most expedient, in a Time of Danger, is no way incoherent with the present State of our own Affairs, and therefore cannot be looked upon as an useless Deviation. — Before a People can be thoroughly actuated to protect their own Rights and Liberties, they should have the Consequences of their Neglect and Indolence laid open in the most glaring and contemptible Light; nor is it in the least improper to urge them to their own Defence, by depicting to them the Advantage and Honour that will naturally result from it. National Indolence is a national Curse; and when we reflect how far this malignant Principle has been destructive to our own Dignity and Power, we have great Reason to exert ourselves, as much as possible, to restore those Privileges and Honours, which our Forefathers so greatly and gloriously acquired.

IN a Juncture when the Credit and Safety of *Gréat Britain* was at Stake, we have seen the Subjects dilatory and insensible of their Situation; and had it not been for the noble Spirit of Patroism, that issued like a Flame from the Breast of One Great Man, who foresaw the Danger that his Country was exposed to, we might, by this Time, have felt such a Shock in our Constitution, as would have rendered us incapable ever afterwards of restoring the least Part of our Privileges: But how much the better would it have been for us, if the People in general had not suffered themselves to be so long imposed upon and drain'd of their Wealth, by the Subtilty and Avarice of those in Power. — The Imposition of heavy Taxes, and other Incumbrances, were yearly levied to be of no Service to the Publick. The Merchant saw his Commercial Affairs in a languishing Condition: The Tradesman stood behind his Counter without Customers: The Artist and Mechanick were obliged to take Refuge in a Jail, to escape the Rage of their Creditors; and those who were at Liberty, were wandering about
C Streets,

Streets, to amuse and divert the Gnawings of Hungar, and the Gripe of Oppression. In this Situation we for a long Time tacitly suffered, none daring in the least, or indeed not dreaming from what Sources these Ills derived, every Man's Thoughts were too much bent on the private State of his Family, and too much distressed in his Circumstances, to set about political Discoveries, provided they had imagined any Thing from that Quarter. Every succeeding Year produced new Distresses; frequent Bankruptcies, and Failures of several Kinds, happened to our greatest Citizens and Merchants; our Jails were full; Provisions dear; and what our Island produced, with more Plenty than any other Nation in the World, was as scarce and hard to be got at, as if we had been fed by the Productions of the *Artic*, or *Antartic*, Soils.

DURING this general Distress, our Enemies the *French*, imagining our Power somewhat enervated, were so very ungenerous as to take the Advantage, by fitting out Fleets, with Troops on Board, to disturb the Repose of our Colonies and Settlements Abroad.

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We were daily shock'd with the Cruelty and Barbarities they committed among our People there ; and it was looked upon as most expedient to declare War against them for such Irruptions. This served only as a fresh Plea for those at the Helm to carry their Designs into Execution, upon the little Wealth that was left in the Nation ; the People were willing to sacrifice what they had for the Honour and Liberties of their Country, and it was with this View only, that they were so easily imposed on ; nor could they do less, when it seemed so connected with their own Welfare : All that could be done was done ; and considering what Difficulties they had waded through already, it was impossible to expect they could do more. — Here we amused ourselves with great Hopes, that the War would be carried on with great Vigour ; that in a little Time we should entirely drive the *French* from our Territories in *North America*, and secure our Trade with those Parts again ; but while we were thus deceiving ourselves with false Appearances and Suggestions, we were told, that the *French* had landed at *Minorca*. On the first Accounts we were

in some little Concern ; but that soon subsided, and the Strength of the Place, and the known Integrity of the Governor, flattered us into our former Insensibility ; we began to think it was impossible the Place could be taken, and so set ourselves down in so much Ease and Security, as even to imagine, that the Strength of the Place would defend it, without the Assistance of Troops, Provisions, and other necessary Succours.

WE had no Reason, at that Time, to suspect the Courage and Fidelity of the Admiral who had the chief Command in this Expedition ; nor could we in the least think, that such a Person, who was so well acquainted with the *Mediterranean* Sea, could have accepted of a Commission without, proper Accommodations for the Business he was going upon : Neither did we, or could we, imagine, that those who sent him out, after sailing round a World, could have been so deficient in Naval Affairs, as to let him go on such an important Errand, without looking nearer into the necessary Concomitants, which an Expedition of so much Weight
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and Consequence required. Nor did we then know, or give ourselves the least Trouble to know, whether those Persons who were employed to adjust the Affairs of the Nation, were acting upon interested or disinterested Principles. A general Soporific had lulled the Suspicions of the People asleep; and what they did not suspect, they did not seem desirous to know.

IN this Manner we slumber'd on, till we were awaked from our Reveries with the bad News of *Minorca* being lost; that the *French* had got Possession of the Fort, and our General had capitulated. At first it appeared like a Dream, and People were at a Loss to know whether they were asleep or awake: — But, alas! every Thing in a little Time appeared too substantial, and one Confirmation came so quick upon the Heels of another, that we were at length obliged to believe it, tho' fore against our Wills. — What was to be done now? — What Methods could be taken to come at the Origin of all this Mischief? — Who was to be accused, but those entrusted to conduct the Affairs of the Nation?

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AT first it was dubious in what Manner to censure these Occupants of Power: Popular Resentment at length broke loose, and fix'd upon the Cowardice and Selfishness of the *Dupe* they had employed; which was happily productive of carrying the Thing still farther, and a lucky Inlet to other Sources, which perhaps would have laid concealed, provided the Vehemence and Outrageousness of the common People had not shewn itself in particular to the Effigy of the crestfallen Admiral. And now the great Genius of the *British* Nation infus'd itself to every *English* Bosom, and if it had not been rather too late, would have been the bravest and justest Opposition, as ever a People put in Practice, for the Honour of their Country; not even the sublime Spirits of *Greece* or *Rome* could have equalled it.

BUT to whom do we owe this Honour? To whom are we obliged to for these extraordinary Instances of Political and National Regard? I think there is no Occasion to point out the Great Man; his Merits have rendered

rendered him more conspicuous than the Imbecility of my Pen can pretend to ; if we speak of a *Demosthenes*, or a *Cicero*, we degrade him, for they both took Bribes ; but He, superior to either of them, has broke open the Cabinet, and drove the Monsters Bribery and Corruption from their Hold ; and, with the Voice of Liberty, alarmed a Nation just nodding to Destruction.

THE Loss of *Oswego* in a great Measure increased the general Resentment ; for who but a Nation of abject Slaves, could be silent on such an Occasion ? An unanimous Enquiry was solicited from all Parts of *Great Britain* ; and here began the Great Scene, which was best adapted to the Genius and Publick Spirit of the *British* Orator. — The Occupants of Power foresaw the Consequences ; and that it was impossible their Neglect and Instability could stand against the noble Determinations of a People so ripe for Revenge ; thought it most essential for their own Safety to resign. — But this was only an artful Way of patching up a Peace with the People ; for, provided the publick

publick Voice had not roar'd so vehemently against them, we should not have heard a Word about Resignation: They were too well acquainted with the Benefits and Advantages of Power, to have given up the least Part, had not their own personal Safety been more the Motive of immediate Concern. Therefore we may easily judge with what View this Retreat from publick Business was calculated; but notwithstanding this, the Odium of the People does not stick so particularly on the Posts or Stations of those who filled them, it remains on the Persons; and tho' the Reptiles have artfully crept from their Holes, yet they are still existing, under a Load of perpetual Infamy and Disgrace.

BUT whether their Intensions in this Point is not a stronger Confirmation of conscious Guilt? Would they not, provided they had known themselves truly honest to their Country, have stood their Ground, and endeavoured to appease the publick Resentment, till a proper Opportunity permitted them to shew their Innocence, and convince their Country, that what they had done was intended

intended for its Welfare; that, notwithstanding some unforeseen Events, they had acted with all the Integrity and Candour that could be wished from such eminent and important Stations: Instead of taking these prudent Methods to divert the Torrent of Calumny, which was rushing upon them like a Deluge, they privately sneak'd from the Helm, as if the Safety of their Persons would render their Characters secure. Tho' even in this Point they were not all of a Mind; for One would absolutely have continued in his Harbour, not merely with a View of acquitting himself to the Publick, but rather from a thorough Sensibility of the Profits accruing from such a Station; however he was obliged to weigh his broken Anchor, and get off as well as he could: But this was all done under the Sanction of a Resignation, which was no other than what some Persons would call a *Humm*; and as such it had its Influence on the Minds of several People, who imagined they had voluntarily given up, what they could not keep with Satisfaction to the Publick. But if this had been the Case, their Resignations would have been derived from a noble and

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just Resentment, and might in some Measure have served to exemplify, that the insatiate Expectations of the People were too exorbitant in their Nature to be answered by human Creatures, who were only distinguished from the Multitude but by Title and Eminence.

In the mean Time whatever could be suggested in their Favour, was entirely exploded by those who had the Welfare of the Nation at Heart; and when the People began to reflect on the little Good they had received under their *wise* and *prudent* Management; it was looked upon as highly expedient, for the Benefit of these Realms, to entrust the Reins of Power in other Hands, who were more capable of directing the great Machine of Politicks over those Ruins and Obstructions which encumbered the Road to publick Happiness. Accordingly the Pass has been nicely and accurately surveyed, and it is agreed to be most necessary, before they can proceed, to clear away the Rubbish which has been left there for these twenty or thirty Years: This must, to be sure, be the Toil of some Years before it

it can be thoroughly effected; and, again, the Vehicle being very much out of Repair, will require much Labour, as well as Art, to make it go easy. However, Workmen and Artists, of several Kinds, are already employed in the Affair; and we hope, by next Winter, to make some Progress in the Scheme; but at present there are so many Obstacles, that if it was not for the Resolution of the new Managers, would almost render such an Attempt impracticable.

THE chief Person who has taken this important Task under his Inspection, has given the most incontestible Proofs of the Greatness of his Mind: As an honest Man he has been looked upon as a Monster by those who were then in Power; as an Orator, his great Elocution, Ease, and Energy of Sentiment, confirm him an useful Ornament to the Nation. To such a Man as this, the greatest Impediments seem trifling; and what would deter a meaner Soul, only serves as a Help to spur him forward to the End of his Intentions. With these extraordinary Faculties, what great Reason have we to hope for Redress, when we consider the Motives that urge him to any Thing, tho'

ever so difficult, for the Welfare and Honour of his Country. — Nor is this all ; let us reflect on his great Spirit of Emulation that will naturally lead him to distinguish himself from the late M——r, and the Difference between a Man in the Prime of Life, and an old superannuated Lady, who in the best of her Days was hardly capable of any Thing above the common Affairs of the Kitchen.

BUT should the Expectations of the People exceed the Bounds of our new M——r's Abilities, and falsely imagine that the Affairs of the Nation may be soon put in Order, let us consider the Damage we have sustain'd from the egregious Blunders of the old Fumblers in the State, who, after so many Years Experience, have left us several Millions of Money more in Debt than they found us ; have suffered our Commerce to decay, our strong Places and Settlements to be taken from us, our Taxes doubled, our Grievances extended, our Privileges lessened, in short, there has been as much Scalping going forward in *Old England*, as there is in *North America*, among the *Indians* ;

dians; nay we have not only been scalp'd, but they have likewise taken the Liberty to fleece us intirely from the Head to Foot, so that among the Sheep of *Great Britain*, there is hardly a whole Skin to sleep in.

BUT we have at length got rid of these political Fleecers; and we may look upon in as great a Light, as if we had drove the *French* and *Indians* out of our Dominions abroad; since therefore we have had such a peculiar Instance of good Fortune, let us take every Advantage we can, to improve so great an Opportunity; and while the Hydra-headed Monster is grovelling in the Quagmire of national Disgrace, and banished from its luxurious Pasture, let us calmly and wisely determine to support those only who are willing to support us; consequently the People will then be of Service to their Ministers and Representatives, who are, from the Principles of Honour, obliged to retaliate their best Endeavours for the Safety and Credit of the Publick. An Unanimity of this Nature would give a Lustre to succeeding Ages, and as it could not fail
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of establishing our present Happiness, would likewise greatly tend to that of Posterity.

WHEN our Welfare is so firmly fixed, what Glory and Honour will circumsolve the Royal Head of that happy Monarch, who shall sit upon the *British* Throne. Distant Nations shall worship him with a Regard equal to his exalted and sublime Station; he shall receive the Applauses of a good and grateful People; his Ministers will act with an inflexible Concurrence to support his Dignity, and render his Fame more extensive, in order to support their own: Monarchical, Ministerial, and Popular Interests will be one and the same; for nothing can be more destructive to a Constitution than separate Interests: The mean Discriminations of High Church and Low Church, Tories and Whiggs, Court and Country, and every other party Stain shall be wiped away from us; a general Concord shall rivet the Heart of one *Briton* to another; while the ancient Characteristick of *Great* and *Good*, shall once more distinguish the Island of *Great Britain*

tain from every other Nation in the Universe.

BUT whither has the Wings of Hope waisted my Imagination? Shall all this come to pass? — Certainly we have great Reason to wish it, and, according to the present Appearance of Things, no small ones to believe it. However, if so great an *Æra* should be brought about, Heaven grant it may be, within the Reign of his present Majesty, as a Reward and Comfort to that venerable Head, which has been so long perplexed with the Cares of his People, and the important Weight of a Crown.

F I N I S.